

Counseling Matters

Collaborative Pupil Services

If you ask a teacher: "On any given day, how many students in your class are motivated, ready, and able to learn?" the answer you receive will not necessarily reflect a majority of students. Teachers request help in dealing with the various problems that their students face, but also for support in facilitating students' healthy social and emotional development. At the same time, schools struggle with diminishing budgets, and may sometimes see activities not directly related to instruction as taking resources away from the primary mission of schools, which is to educate. To add to the burden, schools and their staff, as well as parents and community members, are working to meet the expectations that no child is left behind.

If *all* students are to have an equal opportunity to succeed in school, resources designed to address students' learning, behavioral, emotional and health problems must be focused on enhancing educational outcomes. This includes the work of the pupil services team* : school counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses and other qualified personnel involved in providing assessment, counseling, educational remediation, program coordination and other necessary services as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs.

Collaboration is a process in which individuals and/or groups work together for a common goal, a mutual benefit, or a desired outcome. Trust, respect, openness, active listening, clear communication and risk taking are fundamental requirements for collaborative efforts. In order for collaboration to happen, participants must share a common vision and agree to work toward a common mission. The mission of collaborative pupil services delivery is to serve all children by addressing the barriers which impede learning; provide appropriate and effective services and programs; foster conditions that ensure educational equity, access and academic success for K-12 students; and evaluate these programs consistently and effectively for continuous improvement.

On July 1, 2004, PI 34, the Wisconsin Quality Teacher Initiative, takes effect. Under this law, all educators DPI licensed as pupil service providers (school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists and school nurses) share seven standards for pupil service professionals (to view them online, go to: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/tel/pi34.html#pupilservicesstandards3404>). While each pupil service profession has its own, distinct, set of content guidelines which further define the services provided, the fact that pupil service providers share the seven standards sets expectations for collaboration across disciplines.

The Department of Public Instruction also recognizes and supports the work of the Wisconsin Alliance of Pupil Service Organizations (WAPSO). This group includes representatives from each of the four pupil service professional state organizations (Wisconsin School Counselor Association, Wisconsin School Social Work Association, Wisconsin School Psychology Association, and Wisconsin Association of School Nurses), as well as the Wisconsin Council of

Administrators of Special Services and Department of Public Instruction pupil services consultants.

The mission of WAPSO is to promote and facilitate a greater understanding of the interrelationship between the disciplines involved in Pupil Services teams and their relationship to student success; the strengthening of knowledge and skills to serve as a voice for the disciplines that form a pupil services team; the dissemination of interdisciplinary information; open communication, collaboration and cooperation among member organizations; and the mobilization of grassroots action in the support of pupil services teams.

DPI will continue to support the delivery of collaborative pupil services, while also recognizing that each of the pupil service professionals brings unique knowledge and skills to addressing student needs. The purpose is to provide you, the professional in the schools, with information, leadership and technical assistance in the delivery of collaborative pupil services. I will keep you up-to-date on this.

*In Wisconsin, the four professions which are DPI licensed under the pupil services category include school counselors, social workers, psychologists and nurses. While there are other professionals who provide these types of services, they are not licensed as "pupil service" by DPI.